

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS OF WRITING CLASS THROUGH LESSON STUDY

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Abstract

Lesson Study (LS) is a professional development process that Japanese teachers engage into systematically examine their practice, with the goal of becoming more effective. In the application teachers or lecturers must always improve the quality of teaching learning process that covers preparing syllabus and lesson plan, creating conducive classroom atmosphere and carrying assessment. They can do by cooperating with their colleagues to reach better results. Many teachers are satisfied with the results of teaching learning process. In fact, there are many weaknesses that they do not realize. This research was carried out to answer the question: How does LS improve the quality of teaching learning process of writing class? The results prove that there are a lot of improvements on writing class, e.g. the materials are more challenging, the students are more actively involved during the interaction, the lecturer has more open to receive critics from her colleague, and the students get better achievement in writing.

Keywords: Lesson Study, Writing Class, Teaching Learning Process.

Introduction

Learning language can not be separated with mastering language skills such as: listening, speaking, reading and writing skill as well. Mastering writing can not be separated with well-prepared material, teaching technique, media, approach that all can be reflected briefly in lesson plan. Lesson Plan also reflects briefly about the activities done by the students in the classroom. In short, making a good lesson plan will guarantee that teachers will never spend the time of teaching uselessly.

Teaching writing in university has different goal with teaching writing in any other schools level. University's students are hoped to be able to compose kinds of paragraph. In order to give best product of good paragraphs, students are demanded to be able mastering good grammatical sentences structure, appropriate vocabulary, constructing logical content and unity organization.

But in fact, there are some problems faced by students in writing class. It is difficult for them to produce a good composition of a text such as (1) they made paragraphs in inappropriate vocabularies, (2) there were some mistakes in grammatical sentence structure and (3) reading their text will lead us to the ununity and uncoherent paragraphs. It will be difficult for the people to understand what they want to say through their paragraphs. By using ungrammatical sentence structure in composing paragraphs will be the

problem for the readers to understand the content and the meaning of the paragraphs. There must be any misunderstanding even no written communication built.

Meeting other teacher could be the way out of finding best solution how to conduct a good teaching learning process of writing 3. After discussing with a team, the result can be concluded as follows: (1) the teacher needs to revise her lesson plan, (2) the teacher needs to be more creative in creating some interesting and alive activities, and (3) the teacher needs observers to evaluate the students' behaviour during teaching learning process. All the teacher's need can be found in implementing Lesson Study.

The strength of using Lesson Study in this teaching learning process can be examined easily from the cooperation of the team where they work together to make the teaching's preparation. The teacher does not work by herself but they have to work together in designing lesson plan, syllabus, media, technique, instrument and also assessment as well.

Improving the quality of teaching learning process in writing can be done by lesson study in which the teacher and the observers get together to design syllabus, lesson plan, media, material, students worksheet and its assessment that cover the students' problem in writing 3 those are involving grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, organization and content.

There are many ways of teaching university's students in order to be able constructing good paragraphs, one of them is by Conducting teaching learning process using Lesson Study.

Lesson Study that is stated by Baba (2007: 2): "Lesson Study, currently a topic of worldwide attention, refers to a process in which teachers progressively strive to improve their teaching methods by working with other teachers to examine and critique one another's teaching techniques." In line with the statement above, it can be said that by conducting a Lesson Study, the model cooperates well with another teachers in a team, working together in constructing a lesson plan or syllabus, selecting appropriate material, presenting helpful activities in a good time management, and collaborating with team in observing during teaching learning process while analyzing the students' behaviour in class, the interaction among them, and the ways how the teacher presents the material whether or not it is interesting.

In short, to have better result of conducting process, Lesson Study is applied in writing class in order to answer the following question:, "How does Lesson Study improve the quality of teaching learning process in writing class?"

Theoretical reviews

Lesson Study

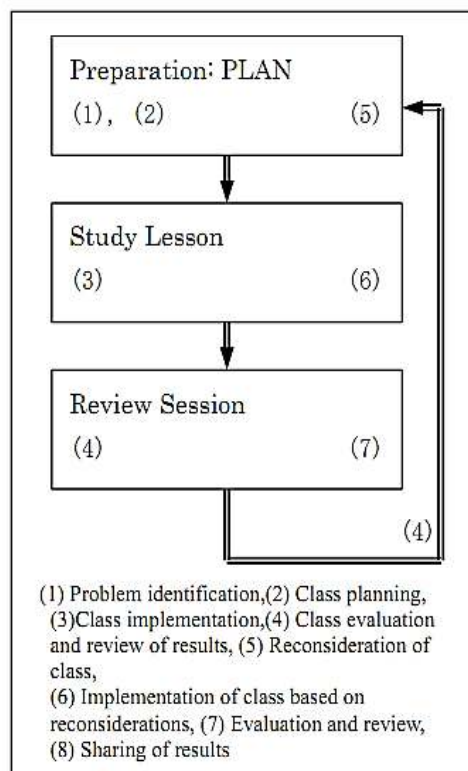
In order to help students achieving the goals well, the teacher must be able to conduct a well-prepared teaching learning process. It deals closely with the syllabus, the material, the activities stated in the lesson plan, and the media as well. According to Bilyeu about Lesson Study (2009: 15), it is stated that: "During Lesson Study a group of teachers are released for the entire school day to allow time to plan a lesson, go into

the classroom to teach it, and meet to reflect on student learning. Teachers use the reflection data to improve the lesson and, eventually, to re teach it.” It can be assumed that conducting LS will be much helpful and beneficial for the teachers to have a successful teaching learning process because all the activities in the classroom will be managed well by the teachers mentioned in Lesson Plan. It seems that there will be no useless times spending by the teachers and students in the classroom.

Moreover, Baba (2007: 2) states, “Lesson Study functions as a means of enabling teachers to develop and study their own teaching practices.” In other word, teachers will learn much about developing and studying their teaching activities through Lesson Study. Since writing is a productive skill, the teachers need to conduct a well-prepared teaching learning process in order to use every minutes as useful activities to produce the best writing product and by applying Lesson Study, the teacher, the observers, and the students will be involved together in the classroom.

For further understanding about lesson study, Stigler & Hiebert (1999) in Rock and Wilson (2005: 78) say, “Lesson study involves groups of teachers meeting regularly over a period of time (ranging from several months to a year) to work on the design, implementation, testing, and improvement of one or several “research lessons”.

The diagram of conducting Lesson Study will be guided by Stigler & Hiebert in Baba (2007: 2):



Furthermore, Haithcock (2010: 4) says, "The objective of Lesson Study is to create structured occasions for teachers to examine teaching and learning. The foci of Lesson Study are to improve the lesson planning process, refine instructional strategies and delivery, evaluate results, evaluate student thinking, and increase student mastery."

Writing

Writing is seen as a series of acts in putting ideas in the form of words or other written symbol to deliver meaning. Runco in Kaufman and Kaufman (2009: 188) says that,

"Writing is best described as a process rather than a product, and it may be that very process that benefits the writer. The benefit may result from the self-discovery allowed by writing or the facts that writers must consider different options, find words, and think of various perspectives while writing."

Further more, Kendall and Kuon (2006: 37) reveal a theory from educators' point of view that "Teaching writing to English Language Learners (ELLs) can be a challenge because they frequently get confused about what they want to say as they work." This means writing enables teachers to be braver in giving students the appropriate way to have them write what is on their minds and working on any information comes to them. The strength of the opinions above explains about the importance of having good preparation before teaching.

According to Murcia (2006: 161) that the most difficult language skill is writing which requires a higher level of productive language control than the other skills. It can't be denied then that writing is regarded as the most difficult language skill to learn for a language learner. Considering this statement, encourage the teacher to choose the best way of teaching the students by making good plan. It must be done collaboratively, since two or more teachers will be better in making a lesson plan. The preparation has been done carefully . It is why choosing Lesson Study becomes the most important thing to do by the teacher to implement LS in writing class.

Dealing with this demand, students are expected to be able to master the technique how to compose their ideas into good paragraph until it can be called as an essay. Creating the conducive classroom situation will also influence the result of teaching learning process. Thus it is a must for the teachers to apply LS in the classroom. Writing class needs the new and better method of teaching because in this productive skill, the students must be guided well to use their minutes well in order to produce their best result of writing. LS helps teachers to create usefull activities in each meeting and syllabus, lesson plan will manage the students' need to reach the goal of learning.

Teaching Writing

In detail, Lauren Starkey (2004: 8) explains about some activities done by the students and teachers in writing class, such as: (1) how to organize the students' thoughts and ideas before they begin writing, with techniques such as freewriting, brainstorming, and outlining. You will even learn why it's important to read good

writing while preparing your essay, (2) saying exactly what they mean by avoiding ambiguous language, using modifiers, eliminating unnecessary words and phrases, and using the active voice whenever possible, (3) examines word choice and how it can accurately convey your ideas, (4) teaches the most common mechanical errors so they can eliminate them from their writing. Troublesome parts of speech, issues such as noun-verb agreement, and punctuation problems are explained, (5) shows them how to revise, edit, and proofread their essay. They will find checklists to use during these processes, as well as tips from professional editors. The use of word-processing programs to help with editing is also covered, (6) covers issues such as long-range planning, prewriting, and understanding the topics. Tips on writing to the audience and striking a balance between formality and informality are also explained, (7) shows students how to prepare for timed essays. Learn how to research they exam, how to familiarize yourself with possible topic choices, and how to budget your time during the writing process and (8) includes sample prompts and essays.

Education is not so simple a business as is often supposed. It is not enough for the teacher to collect together a mass of knowledge, and retail it to his class. Nor is it enough for his personality to be strong enough to make the children do what he wants them to do. Education in fact depends both on the school environment and on the response of the children to the teaching as well as on the subject and the teacher (Board of Education, 1937).

According to Harmer in Robertson and Acklam (2000: 6), "The best teachers are those who think carefully about what they are going to do in their classes and who plan how they are going to organise the teaching and learning". It is stated clearly that teachers have the main role of conducting a successful teaching learning process in any kinds of knowledge discipline, including writing. Writing teacher has to have the strike role of conducting a successful writing classroom that enables students producing good paragraphs following the lesson plan used and designed with some observers as a team.

Creating a conducive and interesting classroom situation will be the role and the duty of the teacher as in writing classroom as well. The ways how to manage the activities to be useful in an effort of producing good writing becomes the main major of the writing teacher. Every second must be managed well. There will be no useless time spent by the teacher or students since every second is full of meaningful activities. It is why desingning lesson plan, selecting appropriate material, choosing suitable media and using the right assessment will be done by the teacher and its team to make the teaching learning process better.

Aspects of Writing as the Quality of the students' writing

Writing is not only the activity of writing down some words or sentences into the written language, but also of composing them into well organized of writing. Brown (2001: 356-358) classifies aspects of writing into six aspects: content, organization, discourse, syntax, vocabulary, and mechanics. Content consists of thesis statements, related ideas, and development of ideas through personal experience, illustration, facts, and opinions. Next, the effectiveness of introduction, logical sequence of ideas, conclusions, and appropriate

length are included in organization. Last, topic sentences, paragraph unity, transitions, discourse makers, cohesion, rhetorical conventions, reference, fluency, economy, and variation are included in discourse. Spelling, punctuation, citation of references, and neatness and appearance are included in mechanics.

Based on Weigle (2002: 116), the aspects of writing consist of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Each aspect cannot be separated from one another but must be integrated in a unity as whole.

Methodology

The method used by the teachers in writing classroom is Lesson Study. It was done in 3 cycles. Each cycle consists of Plan-Do-See as it is stated by Fernandez & Yoshida (2004) in Sa'dijah (2010: 35) state that Lesson Study is held in a set of activities namely Plan-Do-See.

In Plan stage, the teacher identified the problems in writing class. The teachers decided the problems collaboratively while choosing who would be the model and decided the times for the next activity. The teachers worked together to analyze the teaching material and constructed teaching script, composed the steps of learning and the assessment as well. Designing the lesson plan from the beginning had been done together. It was done based on the reflection of the teacher in her previous teaching learning process. By considering the problems occurred in previous teaching learning process, the teachers together with the team or her colleagues designed better lesson plan, teaching material, assessment and media as well. It means that designing or planning lesson plan was based on the problems faced by the teacher and students as well. For the next Plan stage in the next meeting, the teacher and observers came to the agreement to construct some improvements reflected on their lesson plan, material, assessment, media, technique, approach and so forth better. The improvements were always done in the next meeting based on the reflection done by the team teaching of writing.

The observation done in Do stage is the stage for the observers to do their activities during the teaching learning process. The observers had to understand well about what they had to do and what they had to prepare before the teacher did the teaching learning process. The model teacher in this stage would teach the students based on the lesson plan that had been made before in plan stage. It is the time for the teachers to implement what they planned in the classroom. In Do stage, the actual class begins to be observed by another teachers. In this stage, the teacher did the duty to conduct teaching learning process while the observers or another teachers observed the students' behavior during the teaching learning process whether or not they showed enthusiastic in the classroom.

While the teacher did her duty to conduct a successful teaching learning process of writing based on the lesson plan designed before. In every Do stages, this such kind of activities will always be done regularly. Every cycle must show its improvement better than before.

The last stage is important to get better teaching process since in this stage; See, the teachers did reflection on what the model teacher did in her classroom. All the observers discussed about the achievement she made. The weaknesses happened in the teaching learning process would also be discussed in detail to make some improvements for the next cycle. All the students' movement would be analyzed based on their interest in the material, in the teaching method.

Discussion

Lesson Study Improves the Quality of Teaching Learning Process in Writing Class

Discussing about quality of teaching learning process, there are some important things that must be done by teachers, including preparing syllabus, making lesson plan, preparing teaching script and also make assessment as well. Creating a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom must be one of requirements of successful teaching learning process. It is the way how to make students enjoy the material in the class. To make the material easy to learn for students is the teacher's responsibility and it is closely related to the teacher's strategy of teaching.

A Lesson Study is a systematic investigation of student learning and teaching during a research lesson. The point of the study is to understand how the lesson fosters intended forms of learning, thinking and behavior in students. For example, if the goal of a lesson is to develop students' understanding of an important concept, the team observes and monitors changes in students' understanding during the lesson. The data provide the basis for making changes in the lesson intended to improve student understanding.

Conducting a writing class using LS improved the quality of teaching and learning process since LS was not done in one cycle only, but it had to be done more than one cycle meaning that the second cycle was an improvement from the cycle 1. After conducting the first cycle, the team and the model teacher got together to discuss about the process of teaching. The team observed the material presented by the teacher, analyzed more about the lesson plan and also the time management in the classroom. Besides, the team also observed the students behavior during the teaching learning process whether or not the students were interested in the learning process. The team might also observe whether there was any effective communication among the students, between the students and teacher and the students with another environment for example with the media, the material, the handout and worksheet as well.

LS focused on what happens during the lesson. It involved gaining access to the thought process to better understanding about how the students understand the subject, where they stumble, what confuses them, how to put ideas together, how misconception develop, how their thinking is affected by different parts of the lesson. Since it is a systematic approach to observation the team had to decide how to observe the lesson and what data to collect. During the lesson observers kept the detailed account of instructional activities and student responses. The team might also collect students written work and record the lesson for the future analysis.

The special features of LS are the stages of each cycles consisting of Plan Do and See. No wonder that by observing those three stages at the end of conducting teaching learning process, teacher will not only know about material and strategy of teaching only but how her students show responses during the class is on going. The evidence written in a field note will be the witnesses of conducting a teaching learning process using LS. It can be used as a note that must be discussed together, find out the solution of the problems occur in the class.

The first cyle was conducted on 25 September 2013. After conducting a teaching learning process of writing class, the model teacher and the team as the observers sat together to do reflection based on the teaching learning process. In this phase the observers expressed what they saw during the process of teaching and learning writing.

For the first cycle, it was concluded that there were some weaknesses found by the observers such as: (1) teacher more dominated the teaching learning process by giving too much portion of explanation. (2) time wasnot enough to involve the students because there were too much explanations from the teacher, and (3) the number of the groups were too much since one groups consisted of 5 students. It was evaluated as one of problems in giving activities to the students, since not every students worked. In short, the model gave the instruction to the students unclearly. The activities of writing guided by the model was not able to stimulate students to be more active. It seemed that the teacher had too much portion in the activities. In the first cycle not all of the students were involved directly in the activities. In short, it was a poor teaching learning process of writing. There were many suggestions and critics for the next improvement.

The second cycle that was conducted on October 8th, 2013 had some positive things that it was better than the previous teaching. Based on the reflection done after the class, the team agreed to state that some improvements had been shown by the students, and also the teacher. Firstly the weaknesses that could be found in this phase was the activities done by the studens needed more fun and various. On the other hand, the number of the group had been revised, then one group consisted of 2 students or it was time for them to work in pairs. The positive interactions among the students could be seen clearly. The activities done by the students involved all the students in a form of pair work activities. From the students gestures, the students comments, the teaching learning process in this cycles was better than before. Some weaknessess occured in this cycle were in the correcting phase. The teacher waste too much time in correcting. The explanation of the mistakes done by the students was not clear. Time was not enough to do correcting.

The third cycle was on November 16th, 2013. The students showed positive response to the students explanation. They built a good communication to the students and the students had good interaction with another students. The activities were done well. Time management was better than the previous cycle. The preparation dealing with lesson plan, teaching script, time allocation, material and media were prepared well. It was strengthened by the ability from the teacher to create the conducive and pleasant atmosphere in the classroom based on th suggestion from the obeservers.

That is the point or the strength of conducting teaching learning process using LS. Some important things that have been ignored by the model can be seen and observed clearly by the observers. Most of the time, teacher believe that what she prepares is the perfect or the best one. But when all the preparation applied in the classroom, the teacher doesn't realize that the students must be observed whether they show positive response to what the teacher explains or not. If not so, that is the duty of the team or the observers to find out the reasons. And by sitting together the weaknesses that occurred in the classroom can be solved together.

Conclusion

Based on the teaching learning process that had been conducted in writing class by applying Lesson Study, the results that can be taken are as follows: 1) teacher has qualified partner to design together the preparation before teaching, including designing appropriate lesson plan based on the students need, 2) teacher has partner to make a plan of activities needed by the students in order to improve the writing skill reflected on better lesson plan, 3) teacher is more selective in choosing the material because they work together, 4) teacher as like having mirror may do better teaching in her class based on the suggestions and the result of team's observation done in the See stage, 5) based on the students' behaviour the observers give reflection and suggestion to the model to improve her next teaching including the lesson plan, material, assessment, technique used by the teacher, and 6) the mistakes done by the teacher sometimes couldn't be evaluated by the teacher herself, but it can be evaluated easily by another teacher in this case is the observers. The team observed briefly the weaknessess of conducting teaching learning process based on every aspects. By considering every observers' point of view, the teacher had a lot of good things to be improved in the next meeting for the next cycle. Good or ideal teacher will always welcome to the new improvements for the better future.

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